

over again, only this time it's worse for our parents and grandparents. It will turn Medicare into a voucher system, and leave millions without the health care they need and deserve.

As a doctor, I've sat with these seniors when they're trying to choose between one medication or another, one treatment or another, and they can't afford it. This is just wrong. It's bad medicine.

Our parents and grandparents did not work their whole lives paying into a system only to be handed a voucher that doesn't even cover the cost of needed care.

If we work together, we can do better. We can lower the cost of health care. We must honor the promises that we've made to them, and make sure Medicare is secure and strengthened for the next generation.

Mr. RYAN, don't pull the plug on Medicare.

□ 1730

SKILLS ACT

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will vote on the Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills Act, or SKILLS Act. With 12 million Americans out of work and 3.6 million job openings unfilled, the SKILLS Act will modernize and reform our Federal workforce development programs and reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act.

As a former volunteer member of a Workforce Investment Board who had the responsibility for administering these training opportunities, I witnessed firsthand the difficulty and expense these duplicative and overlapping programs create. The SKILLS Act consolidates current programs efficiently so that individuals seeking training will be able to navigate the system with greater success and greater access. The SKILLS Act also refocuses the accountability and control at the local level rather than Washington.

Mr. Speaker, America's competitiveness depends on having a qualified and trained workforce. The SKILLS Act offers just that. President Obama called on Congress in 2012 to work with him to develop a skills training program that is more efficient and effective. The SKILLS Act does just that. Let's take action to put Americans back to work and make America more competitive.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE NOW PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP ACT

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about a bill I introduced earlier today. It's called the Water Infrastructure Now Public-Private Partnership Act. Senator DURBIN and Senator KIRK from Illinois introduced the Senate version as well today.

My bill would improve the Nation's water infrastructure, including the aging locks and dams along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, through public-private partnerships that would expedite projects and save taxpayer money.

My bill would help clear a \$60 billion backlog of U.S. Army Corps projects that will take decades to complete without the help of private investment. It does this by creating a pilot program to explore agreements between the Army Corps of Engineers and private entities as alternatives to traditional financing, planning, design, and construction methods.

Mr. Speaker, the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers are absolutely critical to the economic well-being of not just my region, but also to the entire Midwest, the Nation, and even to the world. Many of these locks and dams were built during the administration of Franklin Roosevelt and are now more than 80 years old. That is why action must be taken to expand and modernize the locks and dams that help transport our goods and products worldwide.

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Every March we commemorate National Women's History Month, a time in which we highlight the many contributions of women who have shaped our great Nation. While we celebrate the tremendous achievements of pioneers who have paved the way, it is important to remember the young girls who need an encouraging environment so that they can grow up to become strong women of character. Education is key to make this happen.

Education is not simply a means to an end but, rather, a vital tool that can help overcome poverty, ignorance, and so much more. However, one in four girls in America does not finish high school, and the dropout rate is even higher for Hispanic teens. Nearly four in ten Hispanic girls will drop out of high school this year. This is alarming.

Mr. Speaker, let's stop this high school dropout rate for all teen girls, and I ask that we renew our commitment to put literacy on our national agenda. Literacy is paramount in the struggle for self-empowerment and education.

HONORING THE McDONNELL FAMILY

(Ms. FRANKEL of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the last memory that Lynn McDonnell has of her 7-year-old daughter, Grace, is of a beaming, beautiful girl blowing kisses to her from a bus as she went on her way to Sandy Hook Elementary School. Soon thereafter, tragedy struck. Grace and 19 of her classmates and six teachers were gunned down by a madman with a semiautomatic rifle.

Our country came together. We mourned together. And now, Mr. Speaker, I'm asking this Congress, come together and do something so no other family knows the sadness of the McDonnells.

Too many lives have been lost and too many communities have been torn apart by violence. Too many families have mourned the loss of their brothers and sisters. Too many people have endured unimaginable pain and grief caused by gun violence. When Lynn McDonnell and her husband, Chris, came to Washington for the State of the Union last month, she said Congress must choose "action over inaction." And I agree.

It's been exactly 3 months now since the Newtown massacre. For the McDonnells and the families in Newtown, Aurora, and my hometown of West Palm Beach, I say let's come together and pass responsible gun safety legislation.

THE HOMES OF CHRISTIANS ARE BURNED IN PAKISTAN

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Christians are under attack in the Muslim nation of Pakistan. Christians live in fear of being persecuted because of their faith. They also can face life in prison or even death if convicted of insulting Islam.

Some say that the religious laws are used as a tool to deal with personal vendettas. A Christian man living in Pakistan last week was accused of committing blasphemy. Suddenly, a large group of men—a mob from a nearby mosque—stormed his home Friday night. The man was arrested. Fearing for their safety, hundreds of other Christian families fled in the dark of the night. On Saturday morning, the mob, as shown in this photograph, returned and began ransacking more Christian homes and setting them ablaze. According to Human Rights activists, more than 100 Christian homes were burned.

Mr. Speaker, Pakistan takes our money but they do not respect the human rights of religious minorities. Some radical Muslims believe that

other religions should be tolerant of their faith, but they are not tolerant of Christians and other Muslim sects. This ought not to be.

But that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JEAN T. MARTIN

(Ms. SEWELL of Alabama asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to the life and legacy of Mrs. Jean T. Martin, a beloved Alabamian who passed away March 11 in Selma, Alabama, at the age of 89. As a dedicated public servant, Jean Martin was known in our local community as a long-serving Selma city councilwoman, an avid local historian, and a gifted journalist.

Personally, Jean was a close friend and trusted mentor. I am deeply saddened by her passing, but I am comforted in knowing that her legacy will live on through the countless life lessons she taught to so many of us.

Jean Martin worked tirelessly as a community editor for the Selma Times Journal. For more than 30 years, she served in various capacities at the newspaper.

She was also an exemplary public servant. She served on the Selma City Council from 1996 to 2008, representing Ward 3, and eventually became the council's president pro tem. During her tenure, she was an exceptional public servant who passionately represented Selma.

On a personal note, Jean Martin served with my mother, Nancy Gardner Sewell, on the Selma City Council and was a beloved colleague and close family friend. My brothers and I affectionately called her "T Jean." She was an amazing mentor and role model to me, and I credit my love of community to her extraordinary example. I am now in Congress and I stand on her shoulders because of the many glass ceilings of this strong woman who died at 89. She was a wonderful public servant.

I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in paying tribute to the life and legacy of Jean Martin.

□ 1740

CONGRATULATING HAYWARD HIGH SCHOOL'S LADY 'CANES

(Mr. DUFFY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hayward High School's Lady 'Canes for winning the WIAA State Hockey Championship. In only their sixth year of playing varsity-level hockey, the Lady 'Canes defeated the Onalaska Hilltoppers in a thrilling 5-2 match. The Lady 'Canes out-skated their top-ranked opponent for three periods and took home Hayward High School's first hockey cham-

pionship. Let me tell you what, as a Hurricane, it has been way too long.

With great leadership from their coaches, combined with the perseverance of the players, they showed the true spirit Wisconsinites have for sports and competition. These ladies would get up at 6:45 in the morning before school, training 5 to 6 days a week, participating in community service, and never losing sight of the importance of education.

So, today, I stand before you with a pink tie saying congratulations to Hayward High School's Lady 'Canes for a job well done. Congratulations.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). Members are reminded not to traffic the well while other Members are under recognition.

REPUBLICAN HOUSE BUDGET

(Mrs. LOWEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LOWEY. The House Republican budget resolution is a blueprint for stalled growth, joblessness, and abandonment of American families.

Since 2010, Congress has cut services and investments critical to American families by \$1.5 trillion. Sequestration slashed an additional \$68 billion, which will cost 750,000 jobs this year alone.

This budget resolution will exacerbate this damage by cutting an additional \$1 trillion over 10 years from funding levels agreed to in the Budget Control Act. It would have a severe impact on critical services and investments like veterans' benefits, homeland security, schools, medical research, law enforcement, and Pell Grants.

It is time to stop the mindless cuts to critical services and investments and support job growth and middle class families.

OPEN THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE

(Mr. STEWART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in defense of the common people of America—people who don't have annual vacations to Hawaii, people who don't fly to their vacations on private jets. Many of these families save for months or even years in order to visit Washington, D.C., and one of the things they expect to do when they come here is to be able to visit the White House, which is the people's House. And now this President has closed it in order to make a political point. Now that that decision has proven unpopular, he has done something that he has frequently done before and that is to blame someone else. He says it wasn't my decision; it was the Secret Service who made the decision to close the White House.

It only costs the White House \$3.7 million to keep it open to tourists for an entire year. That's much less than this President will spend on any single vacation that he takes, which is why I introduced a resolution in the House yesterday asking the President to forego any more taxpayer-funded vacations until he opens the people's House once again.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the President to consider this request. Open the people's House, Mr. President. Open it up for the people of America.

IMPACTS OF SEQUESTRATION

(Mr. BARBER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, sequestration has been in effect for just 2 weeks, and the impacts of these mandatory, across-the-board cuts already are deeply affecting the lives of my constituents in southern Arizona.

Cuts to the Border Patrol are not only among the most devastating cuts caused by sequestration; they will seriously erode the progress we've made toward securing our border. Border Patrol agents have been told that they will be furloughed without pay for 1 day per pay period, and much of their overtime will be eliminated.

Taken together, these actions will greatly reduce the pay of these Border Patrol agents by between 20 and 40 percent. We must work together to immediately come to grips with this problem to restore these cuts so the border can once again be safe and secure.

SECOND TIME IS A CHARM FOR TRAVIS TIGERS

(Mr. OLSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, my own district, Texas 22, is where Texas high school basketball champions reside.

B.F. Terry High School in Rosenberg won the 4A State Championship last Saturday. Right after that game, the Travis Tigers took the court to chase after the Texas 5A title. Travis had lost in the State championship game last year. They were determined to bring the trophy home this year, and they did just that by defeating South Grand Prairie 46-38. Led by the Harrison twins, Aaron and Andrew, the Travis defense smothered Grand Prairie from the start by allowing two baskets in 20 attempts.

Congratulations to Coach Brownson and the whole team. Find a spot in the school's trophy case because the Travis Tigers are the champs.

SETTING PRIORITIES AND BALANCING THE BUDGET

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1